

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 01676 220523Z

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

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R 211536Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1928

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1676

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, SY

SUBJ: ISRAELI-SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT ISSUE

1. SOURCES CLOSE TO DAYAN ARE QUOTED IN TODAY'S PRESS AS STATING THAT HE IS UNDECIDED OVER GOING TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT, DESPITE GOI ANNOUNCEMENT THAT TRIP IS SET FOR MARCH 29. SEVERAL REASONS ARE CITED FOR DAYAN'S INDECISION: INFLEXIBILITY ON PART OF SYRIA, HIS BELIEF THAT US WILL ESPOUSE SYRIAN POSITION THAT ISRAEL MUST WITHDRAW FROM KUNEITRA AND EFFECT OF SECRETARY'S TRIP TO MOSCOW ON DISENGAGEMENT ISSUE. ON LATTER POINT, GOLAN OF HAARETZ STATES THAT SECRETARY WILL TRY TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH SOVIETS ON FORMULA FOR DISENGAGEMENT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE FOLLOWING ELEMENTS: SIRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SASA SALIENT AND KUNEITRA, THINNING OQBFIF FORCES WHICH WOULD ENSURE THAT ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ON GOLAHVHTS ARE OUT OF SYRIAN ARTILLERY RANGE AND UNEF PRESENCE COMBINED WITH A SYRIAN CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN

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PAGE 02 TEL AV 01676 220523Z

AREA EVACUATED BY ISRAEL.

2. ABOVE FORMULA IS SAID TO BE UNACCEPTABLE TO GOI PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF POINT ON ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM BEYOND 1967 CEASEFIRE LINE. ONLY IF SYRIAN POSITION WERE MODIFIED IN ONE OF TWO ASPECTS--DROPPING OF DEMAND FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM KUNEITRA OR AN EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS ON PART OF SYRIA TO TURN NEGOTIATIONS ON SEPARATION OF FORCES INTO NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT--WOULD DAYAN'S TRIP TO US BE JUSTIFIED.

3. IN ADDITION TO ABOVE REPORTS, FOREIGN MINISTER EBAN IS REPORTED IN PRESS TO HAVE TOLD SECRETARY THAT MRS MEIR'S GOVERNMENT MIGHT COLLAPSE IF PRESSURED TO WITHDRAW BEYOND 1967 CEASEFIRE LINE. THAT WOULD MEAN LIKUD TAKING OVER GOVERNMENT AND THEREBY LEAVING US WITH NO ONE TO TALK TO.

4. COMMENT. IT STRIKES US THAT, JUST AS SYRIA IS USING DAILY SHELLING OF ISRAELI POSITIONS ON NORTHERN FRONT AS MEANS OF PRESSURING ISRAEL, SO ISRAEL MAY BE USING REPORTS OF ADAMANT POSITION ON NOT WITHDRAWING FROM KUNEITRA AND POSSIBLE CANCELLATION OF DAYAN'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON AS PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON SYRIA. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT ISRAEL IS STILL EXERCISING RESTRAINT IN THE FACE OF CONTINUED VIOLATIONS BY SYRIA OF CEASEFIRE. IN MARCH 21 KNESSET DEBATE CALLED BY LIKUD TO DISCUSS WHAT ISRAEL SHOULD DO TO COUNTERACT SYRIAN SHELLING, DAYAN STATED THAT USE OF MORE FORCE BY ISRAEL WOULD "BRING ABOUT ESCALATION, PERHAPS TEMPORARY, IN THE CURRENT WAR ATMOSPHERE ON THE SYRIAN FRONT. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER INTENSIFYING OUR MILITARY ACTIVITY WILL PUT AN END TO SYRIAN AGGRESSION." DAYAN'S STATEMENT INDICATES TO US THAT ISRAEL WILL CONTINUE TO BE CAUTIOUS IN RESPONDING TO SYRIAN PROVOCATIONS.
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